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# LIFE OF GEN. ZACHARY TAYLOR, THE WHIG CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

BY BEN: PERLEY POORE.

[GENERAL TAYLOR's military exploits are not the *causes* of his popularity; they are only the *occasions* for the display of his sound judgment, energy of character, lofty and pure sense of justice, and incorruptible honesty. He has as much reputation for what he has written, as for what he has done, because even where the composition is not his own, the sentiments, motives and feelings are; and every thing he says, as every thing he does, is marked by the purity and loftiness of his own character.]—*General Persifer F. Smith, an "out and out Loco Foco."*

ZACHARY TAYLOR's ancestors emigrated from England in 1692, to Virginia, the Southern parent of those "thirteen old colonies," that rose suddenly, like the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus, into full grown men; not, however, armed like those fabulous warriors, with weapons for their own destruction, but with the strength, vigor and intelligence of the Anglo-Saxon race. His father, "Col. Dick Taylor," (as he was familiarly called,) was born on the 22d day of March, 1744, and after receiving a degree at William and Mary College, set off, though still a mere boy, to explore the trackless solitudes of the banks of the Mississippi. His elder brother, Hancock, had been killed by the Indians, while surveying for government near the falls of the Ohio; but this did not daunt Richard, who traversed the forests as far South as Natchez, returning home alone, over a long and dangerous trail. Allied with many of those great and good men who graced the palmy days of the Old Dominion, he had strong ties to bind him to the home of his fathers; but like many others, he feared the ultimate effect of the enervating round of hospitalities which had been adopted from the mother country, and determined to remove to a more primitive region.

The breaking out of the Revolutionary struggle enlisted his services in behalf of those principles, for the support of which the delegates of the Colonies had pledged "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor"—a pledge which every Whig, of every section of the country, regarded as binding him individually. Elected Colonel of a regiment in the Virginia line, he applied himself to military affairs and tactics with such steadiness, that in less than three months he was perfectly master of the command which had been entrusted to him. He served throughout the struggle, with such courage and zeal as to win the commendation of his superior officers, and par-

ticularly distinguished himself at the passage of the Delaware and battle of Trenton, where, fighting by the side of Lieutenant (afterwards President) Munroe, he attracted Washington's particular notice. The Virginians were mainly instrumental in gaining that important victory, which saved Philadelphia, and raised the drooping spirits of the insurgents.

On the 20th of August, 1779, Col. Taylor received the congratulations of his friends, as the happy bridegroom of Sarah Strother, then nineteen years of age, to whom Nature had been no niggard in the bestowal of personal attractions, which adorned a cultivated mind and a Christian heart. Their family eventually numbered five sons and three daughters—the third son, Zachary Taylor, was born in Orange county, Virginia, on the 24th of November, 1790.

In July, 1791, Col. Taylor, accompanied by his family, left Virginia, for her eldest daughter, Kentucky, that great State which led the march of civilization Westward, and whose forests had been stained with so many massacres, that it was called the "dark and bloody ground." He settled in Jefferson county, about five miles from Louisville, and two from the Ohio river—one of the leaders of those hardy pioneers who attained such brilliant victories over their savage opponents, and the wild luxuriance of untamed nature. Uniting indomitable industry to a rare strength of judgment, Col. Taylor produced at home all the necessities of life, purchasing neither clothing nor food, and was always "beforehand." No plantation was better fenced or kept in better order than his; and as the forests around his humble dwelling fell beneath the axe of the settler, to be replaced in the landscape by smiling fields, the old veteran could look around him with the soul-cheering satisfaction that in the work of improvement he had not been a drone in the hive.

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Nor were his neighbors unmindful of the claims to their esteem of one who thus invariably sustained the character of an upright and patriotic citizen. He was elected a member of the convention for framing the constitution of Kentucky; a Representative, and afterwards Senator, from Jefferson county to the State Legislature, and a member of the electoral colleges which voted for Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Clay.—Washington, with whom he had been on the most intimate terms in Virginia, finding that he maintained his high reputation in the home of his adoption, appointed him Collector of the port of Louisville, New Orleans being then a Spanish province. After a long life of industrious labor, for his country and for himself, Col. Richard Taylor died as he had lived, an honest man—the noblest work of God.

Meanwhile, an inmate of a humble log cabin, the character of young Zachary was formed amidst the hardships and dangers of backwoods life. His mother instilled into the youthful minds of her sons those Christian virtues which she practised with exemplary devotedness, and in the long winter evenings, when the doors had been barricaded, and the loaded rifles laid ready to repel any attack that might be made by the Indians before morning, their father would tell them of the Revolution. Not merely to "show how fields were won," but to portray the patriotism and integrity of his beloved chief, in the hope that his boys might, following the example of Washington, be inspired with those unselfish and diffident, but devoted and fearless sentiments and emotions, which arm patriots for noble and sublime efforts. New England, even then, sent her "schoolmaster abroad," and the young Taylors became pupils of Mr. Elisha Ayres, a native of Connecticut, who in 1847, then upwards of four-score years of age, was residing at Preston, in the vicinity of Norwich, and gave the following account of "young Zachary:—"

"The Kentuckians were then a warlike and chivalrous people, and they were often engaged in offensive or defensive skirmishes with the Indians. A number were known to be in the woods not far distant from the school-house, and, on one occasion, one of them was shot, wearing a British uniform. In their hostility to the Americans, they were encouraged and sustained by the British authorities on the Northern frontier. There was a Mr. Whetsel, in the neighborhood of the school, who, having been once chased by three or four Indians, loaded his rifle while running, and successfully shot them all. This exploit made Whetsel famous, and he became the instructor of the young men and boys in the neighborhood, in his mode of maintaining a running fire. Among his pupils, it is believed, was young Zachary."

"The child is father to the man," an English poet tells us; and one can trace in the bold, upright career of Gen. Taylor, marks of his early intercourse with those adventurous "Hunters of Kentucky," who were "fit to stand by Nimrod and give direction." Daring and untrammelled, they deemed themselves the equals of any men, and acknowledged no superior, while the belief that they were capable of doing any reasonable act rendered them equal to its accom-

plishment. Sharing in the incidents and perils of their hunting parties, young Taylor acquired much practical wisdom, with a stalwart constitution. Many are the traditions around his home, which illustrate his cool daring. In the Spring of 1806, (when Lewis Cass always appeared with a black cockade in his hat, as a proof of his federalism,) Zachary Taylor, after a hard day's ploughing in a new "clearing," swam across the Ohio river, then filled with floating ice, a feat which is cited as surpassing in danger and difficulty the far famed exploit of swimming the Hellespont.

While thus engaged in agricultural pursuits, Zachary Taylor, with his intimate friends, Joseph P. Taylor and George Croghan, (now officers of high rank in our gallant army,) joined a volunteer rifle corps, raised as a portion of a force to oppose the supposed treasonable designs of Aaron Burr, and served in it as sergeant until the alarm had subsided. Soon afterwards came the news of the capture of the United States frigate Chesapeake by the British frigate Leopard, kindling into a blaze the angry feelings that the repeated aggressions of the English nation had raised to so high a pitch. A desire to vindicate the outraged honor of his country at once took possession of the mind of Taylor, and he applied for a commission left vacant by the death of his elder brother. Mr. James Madison and other influential relatives recommended him highly, and on the 3d of May, 1808, President Jefferson signed his commission as 1st Lieutenant of the 7th Regiment of United States Infantry. Subsequent events have shown that the young soldier merited the flattering replies given to the President's invariable questions, when candidates for public offices were proposed to him—"Is he honest?—is he faithful?—is he capable?"

Ordered to join his regiment, which was then under Gen. Wilkinson, at New Orleans, Lieutenant Taylor was there seized with the yellow fever, and narrowly escaped death. He returned home to recruit his health, and afterwards repaired to the barracks at Cincinnati, where he studied all the military works he could procure, and acquired that thorough knowledge of the "art of war" which has since enabled him to command with such skill. General Harrison, who was then Governor of the North-Western Territory, learning the successful efforts of the English agents to induce Tecumseh and Olliwachica, (better known as the Prophet,) to league the Miamies and other Western tribes to take up arms against the United States, marched into the Indian country. While on this expedition, in which Lieut. Taylor served, he built several stockade forts, and one of them, situated on the Wabash, some fifty miles above Vincennes, was named, in honor of the commander, Fort Harrison.

In 1810, Lieutenant Taylor was married to a lady who is described as one of the most elegant among the many belles who have united their fortunes to those of our

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Zachary Taylor  
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country's brave defenders, and at the same time is noted for her humble yet unaffected piety, being a member of the Episcopal church. Not long after his marriage, the young Lieutenant was sent on an expedition into the Indian country, and so long a time elapsed without tidings of him reaching his family, that they began to fear that he had fallen a victim to his perilous duty. The Secretary of War, however, was so pleased with his devoted activity that he recommended him for promotion, and in 1812, President Madison rewarded him with a Captain's commission, attached to which was an order appointing him commander of Fort Harrison.

Captain Taylor, at the head of fifty soldiers, arrived at Fort Harrison, in May, 1812. On the 19th of June the President sanctioned a Declaration of War against Great Britain. The young commander strained every nerve to place his stockades in a proper state of defence; but owing to the proximity of marshy ground, many of his men were seized with fever, and between labor and skirmishing, the few who escaped sickness were soon worn out. Aware of this, the Indians imagined that it would be an easy matter to exterminate the whole garrison, and came, nearly four hundred and fifty strong, on the night of the 3d of September, when Captain Taylor, debilitated himself, had only sixteen men fit for duty. The Indians at first attempted to enter the fort by stratagem, killing two young men, who were making hay in the vicinity, late in the evening; but Capt. Taylor was too well acquainted with their manoeuvres to send out a party for the corpses until the next morning. They were found scalped and mangled, adding fresh fear to the alarmed women who had sought protection within the stockade, and greatly embarrassed the few men who could join in the limited preparation for defence.

On the evening of the 4th, the Prophet sent a delegation, headed by a white flag, to beg admittance into the stockade, under the pretence of smoking the pipe of peace; but Captain Taylor refused to open the gates, although he gave them provisions and tobacco. After retreat beating he examined each musket, saw that sixteen rounds of ammunition were in each cartridge-box, and ordered one of the non-commissioned officers to walk around the inside of the stockade during the night, as he was only able to post three sentinels. About eleven o'clock, the Indians approached on all sides, as it was so dark they could not be perceived, and having set fire to a store-house, gave the war-whoop. Perfectly collected, the young commander gave orders for extinguishing the flames, but his men were so debilitated that they could do but little, and some whiskey catching fire, it shot up in blue, glaring columns, which rendered the scene truly appalling. "Most of the men," says Taylor, in his official report, "immediately gave themselves up for lost, and I had

the greatest difficulty in getting my orders executed; and, sir — what from the raging of the fire — the yelling and howling of several hundred Indians — the cries of nine women and children (a part soldiers' and a part citizens' wives, who had taken shelter in the fort) — and a desponding of so many of the men, which was worse than all — I can assure you that my feelings were very unpleasant." Two of the stoutest privates jumped the pickets and ran off; but Captain Taylor was firm, and succeeded in inspiring his feeble garrison with his own courage. We copy further from his report:

"My presence of mind did not for a moment forsake me. I saw by throwing off part of the roof that joined the blockhouse that was on fire, and keeping the end perfectly wet, the whole of the building might be saved, and leave only an entrance of eighteen or twenty feet for the Indians to enter, after the house was consumed; and that a temporary breastwork might be formed to prevent their entering even there. I convinced the men that this could be accomplished, and it appeared to inspire them with new life: and never did men act with more firmness or desperation. Those that were able (while others kept up a constant fire from the upper blockhouse and the two bastions) mounted the roofs of the houses, with Doctor Clark at their head, (who acted with the greatest firmness and presence of mind, the whole time the attack lasted, which was seven hours,) under a shower of bullets, and in less than a moment threw off as much of the roof as was necessary. This was done, with one man killed, and two wounded, and I am in hopes neither of them dangerously. The man that was killed was a little deranged, and did not get off the house as soon as directed, or he would not have been hurt; and although the barracks were several times in a blaze, and an immense quantity of fire against them, the men used such exertion, that they kept it under; and, before day, raised a temporary breastwork as high as a man's head. Although the Indians continued to pour in a heavy fire of balls, and an innumerable quantity of arrows, during the whole time the attack lasted, in every part of the parade, I had but one other man killed — nor any other wounded inside the fort — and he lost his life by being too anxious; he got into one of the *galies* in the bastions, and fired over the pickets, and called out to his comrades that he had killed an Indian, and neglecting to stoop down in an instant, he was shot.

"One of the men that jumped the pickets, returned an hour before day, and running up towards the gate, begged for God's sake for the Indians to get in, as I did not recollect the voice; I directed the men in the bastion where I happened to be to shoot him, let him be who he would, and one of them fired at him, but fortunately he ran up the other bastion, where they knew his voice, and Doctor Clark directed him to lie close to the pickets, behind an empty barrel that happened to be there, and at daylight I had him let in. His arm was broken in a most shocking manner, which he says was done by the Indians, which I suppose was the cause of his returning. I think it probable that he will not recover. The other they caught about one hundred and thirty yards from the garrison, and cut him all to pieces. After keeping up a constant fire until about six o'clock, the next morning, which we began to return with some effect, after daylight, they removed out of reach of our guns. A party of them drove up the horses that belonged to the citizens here, and as they could not catch them very readily, shot the whole of them in our sight, as well as a number of their hogs. They drove off the whole of the cattle, which amounted to sixty-five head, as well as the public oxen.

"I had the vacancy filled up before night, (which was made by the burning of the blockhouse) with a strong row of pickets, which I got by pulling down the guard house. We lost the whole of our provisions, but must make out to live upon green corn, until we can get a supply, which I am in hopes will not be long."

The unaffected manner in which young Taylor thus reported his heroic defence of a defenceless post, though it does not possess the severe style and finished terseness of his more recent military papers, is marked by the same modesty and vigor of thought,

and his victory was on every tongue in the Western country. Major General Hopkins wrote to Gov. Shelby of Kentucky: "The firm and almost unparalleled defence of Fort Harrison, by Captain Zachary Taylor, has raised for him a fabric of character not to be effaced by eulogy." He received the brevet rank of Major, the first brevet commission given by an American President, and from that moment his life has been one continued scene of victory, under the most disadvantageous circumstances. No matter how baffling or discouraging have been the difficulties to encounter, the energy and resolution which he first displayed at Fort Harrison have conquered—the word *impossible* appears to have been omitted from his vocabulary, and his men follow him as one who carries victory chained to his standard. This reputation has the same effect in the army as in the navy, where it is well known that Decatur or Hull could make sailors perform prodigies of valor, who had shown the "white feather" under other officers. Old Ironsides would be defended with ten times as much resolution as the ill-fated Chesapeake could have been. In the navy, or army, or political strife, it is half the battle gained, to have a leader to whom success is habitual. "GENERAL TAYLOR NEVER SURRENDERS."

The defence of Fort Harrison so disheartened the Indians that Tecumseh was unable to carry out his project of exterminating the whites, and in several subsequent engagements, Major Taylor so distinguished himself as to receive the official commendation of Major General Hopkins. He was in several skirmishes, and accompanied Col. Russell several hundred miles up the Missouri, in the month of November, to secure a small settlement on that river, left much exposed to the depredations of the savages. Three months before the conclusion of the war he was placed in command over the entire Indiana forces, and received the cheering news of peace at Vincennes. This first campaign of Taylor was thus prophetically summed up by J. C. Breckenridge, of Kentucky, thirty years since.

"When we look back," continues the biographer, "on the many important services rendered by this officer to his country during the late war; when we reflect on the peculiar perils and hardships to which those services must have perpetually exposed him, performing as he did, in one year, marches to the territories of Indiana, Illinois and Missouri, amounting to more than 3000 miles, and find no solitary instance in which the extent of his achievements did not exceed the scanty measure of his means; we cannot restrain the expression of our regret at his detention from those glorious fields of civilized combat, where his genius might have borne him to nobler enterprise, and his valor displayed itself on a more conspicuous theatre."

"With a frame fitted for the most active and hardy enterprise, an ardent spirit, a sanguine temper, and an invincible courage, gifted with a rapid discernment, a discriminating judgment, and a deep knowledge of mankind, and possessing a heart susceptible of the most generous impulses of humanity, we regard Major Taylor as an officer of peculiar promise, and hazard, we think, but little in the prediction that, in the event of war at no distant period, between the United States and England or Spain, riding on the tide of military glory, he will find his true level at the head of the army."

It is by no means remarkable that one

who knew General Taylor in his youth, should predict that in the event of a war, with "England or Spain,"—Mexico was then Spain—he would find his true level at the head of the army. He has already found that level, but it was not his true one. The true level of such a man can never be found but at the head of the nation. His biographer might well regret the detention of such a man from those glorious fields of civilized combat, where his services might have borne him to a nobler enterprise, and his valor displayed itself in a more auspicious theatre. He has "bided his time," and will soon enter upon his true field.

When the army was remodelled, after the cessation of hostilities, Major Taylor found himself degraded to the rank of Captain. Although he has never claimed promotion, he felt that he could not submit to a degradation which implied that he had not performed his duties. He therefore resigned his commission and returned to his farm, where he purchased stock and made preparations to engage in agricultural pursuits.—Remonstrances from officers and civilians, setting forth the great injustice which had been done to Captain Taylor, had their desired effect, and he was reinstated in his former well-earned rank by President Madison, in 1816, though it is said that nothing but the strong persuasions of those friends who had exerted themselves so strenuously in his behalf, could induce him to leave his happy home for the tented field.

Major Taylor was first ordered to Green Bay, at that time far beyond the limits of civilization. It is the scene of one of the most characteristic anecdotes of this incomparable man, whose private virtues far surpass his military fame. The Paymaster, (as the story is told,) received from the government the necessary funds to pay off the U. States troops, which funds, save a small amount, he exchanged for the bills of J. H. Piatt & Co., Bankers, in the city of Cincinnati. This was a "business transaction" on private account. The Paymaster proceeded to Detroit, and there paid off the soldiers in this individual responsibility paper; he then proceeded to Mackinaw, and there paid the soldiers in like manner; lastly he reached Green Bay.—Here again the Paymaster, with proper official solemnity, counted out to Capt. Taylor the bills of J. H. Piatt & Co., Bankers, for the soldiers. "Old Zack" looked at the "rags" and said:—"Is this the stuff you intend to pay us?" The Paymaster assured him it was the same he had paid to the men at Detroit and Mackinaw; "but," says he, with a knowing wink, "I have United States Bank Bills for you officers." To this Captain Taylor replied:—"Sir, my men can receive no money that I am unwilling to take myself—go back and get us good money."

After commanding the post at Green Bay for two years, he joined the Southern force under Col. Russell, where he remained until 1824, with the exception of a visit to his wife, when she was dangerously ill. The erection



of Fort Jesup, the construction of a military road, and other important duties, were performed in a manner which won for Major Taylor the approbation of his superior officers, while his subordinates idolized him, for although scrupulously exact in requiring a faithful performance of their duties, he treated them with fatherly kindness. One day, at Fort Jesup, a carpenter, who had been sent to fell a tree, thought that as the weather was warm he would indulge in a nap, from which he was awakened by the ringing of an axe, wielded in true backwoods style. Springing to his feet, he saw to his amazement that his commanding officer had nearly performed the task which he had neglected, and began to stammer forth an excuse. "Never mind, my man," said Major Taylor; "passing accidentally, I saw you asleep, and knowing that the Lieutenant who is on his way here with a party to carry this log to the fort, would report you for neglect of work, I have saved myself the disagreeable duty of ordering you to be put in irons. But mind — don't do so again."

Deservedly popular with his men, Major Taylor had but to advertise for recruits at any place in the Western country, and hundreds flocked to his station; but although he might have remained in the recruiting service for years at Louisville, near his family, he was not willing that his name should be thus used to entice men into the army, who might be ill-treated by the officers of the regiments to which they would be detailed.

In 1819 he was made Lieutenant Colonel, and after commanding several of those frontier posts which mark the Western limit of civilization, was ordered to Washington, to sit as a member of a Board of Army and Militia Officers, convened by the Secretary of War, to propose a system for organizing the militia of the nation. General Scott was President of this commission — the members were Brigadier General Eustis, Lieut. Colonel Taylor, Lieut. Colonel Cutler, and Maj. Nourse, of the regular service; and Major General Cadwalader, Adjutant General Daniel, and Adjutant General Sumner, of the militia. Some of the older officers wished to keep a portion of the militia (or their substitutes,) in constant service, but Lieutenant Colonel Taylor opposed this approach to a standing army, taking the ground that the militia was an institution for the defence of homes and firesides, and every able-bodied man should be in a state of readiness to act in the hour of danger. He drew up an able report, which was finally adopted by the Board, and approved of by Congress, though the bill based upon it still slumbers in the room of the Committee on the Militia, who seem to forget the maxim of our *pater patrie* — "In time of peace prepare for war."

For the ensuing five years Lieut. Colonel Taylor was stationed on the North-western frontier, where he occupied the leisure hours which a soldier has in "piping times of peace," by a course of study which will be of

great advantage to him in filling the first civil office in the nation, to which admiring thousands now invite him. "As plain Lieut. Colonel Taylor," says one who then knew him, "I have often seen him putting his men through the battalion drill, on the northern banks of the Wisconsin, in the depth of February. This would seem only characteristic of the man, who has since proved himself equally 'Rough and Ready,' under the scorching sun of the tropics. But, looking back, through long years, to many a pleasant hour, spent in the well selected library of the post, which Colonel Taylor then commanded, we recur now, with singular interest, to the agreeable conversations, held in the room which was the Colonel's favorite resort, amid the intervals of duty." And the same chronicler of his severe habits of discipline and study, continues: "Nor will the reader think these personal reminiscences impertinent, when we add that our object in recurring to them here is simply to mention that, remembering alike the wintry drill and the snug book room, Taylor's hardihood — the idea of which now so readily attaches to his sobriquet of Rough and Ready — would certainly not then have struck a stranger as more characteristic than his liberal-minded intelligence."

In 1832 Taylor was promoted to the command of the 1st Regiment of Infantry, a part of the force under General Atkinson, which was ordered against the Sac Indians, commanded by Black Hawk, who had committed many acts of savage ferocity. After pursuing this redoubtable chief through an almost impassable wilderness, he was overtaken on the "Bad Axe," near the junction of the Mississippi and Iowa, and after a desperate action, entirely defeated. Black Hawk escaped, but was delivered up in a few weeks by some faithless allies, and entrusted to the charge of Colonel Taylor, who conveyed him to Jefferson Barracks.

The "Black Hawk War" terminated, Colonel Taylor was ordered to the command of Fort Crawford, near Prairie du Chien, which had been erected under his superintendence. For several years he held the responsible post of Indian Agent, in which capacity he won the respect and confidence of the tribes placed under his care, banishing all sellers of "fire water" (whiskey) after destroying their poison, aiding the missionaries in their work of Christian love, and showing an honesty and good faith, which unfortunately has not characterized all those who had the disbursement of the funds which should be paid to the red man, as a paltry recompense for the home of his fathers. The biographers of Lewis Cass state that when he crossed the Alleghany, he had but one dollar in his pocket — yet it is well known, that in a few years he was in the possession of a colossal fortune. The fees of a country attorney in the far West are not large, and when once we asked a Western man how Cass could afford to lavish money as he did, when aping nobility at

Paris, he replied, with a significant wink — "Oh! he was an Indian Agent. Light come, light goes." The honest name of Zachary Taylor has never been stained by the breath of the slightest reproach, for like the Roman matron, he is "above suspicion."

In 1832, Lewis Cass, then Secretary of War, procured the passage of a fraudulent treaty with the Seminole Indians, by which they were bound to emigrate west of the Mississippi, though it was never signed by Micanopy and other influential chiefs, who had governed the tribe for years. Not having been parties to this plan for obtaining their hunting grounds, they declared they would not leave; and Osecola indignantly exclaimed at the next council, as he drove his scalping-knife into a table, "this is the only treaty I will execute." "I am no slave," he remarked on another occasion; "my skin is dark, but not black. I am an Indian — a Seminole. The white man shall not make me black. I will make the white man red with blood; and then blacken him in the sun and rain, where the wolf shall smell of his bones, and the buzzard live upon his flesh." This threat was carried into execution, and although the Indians could not reach the origin of their decree of banishment, they wreaked a terrible vengeance on every white, rendering Florida a scene of devastation, murder, sorrow and distress. The long smothered passions of an oppressed race were let loose, and a war of seven years ensued, which will be long remembered by those who participated in it, although their country was little disposed to award them the praise they so well deserved.

The climate, ignorance of the country, and the treachery of the enemy, baffled the skill of the most zealous and intelligent officers. Military science was completely defied, and General Scott was arraigned before a Court of Inquiry, held at Frederick, Md., to explain the entire failure of his operations, attended with an immense expenditure of life and money. During the sitting of this Court, Colonel Taylor assumed the entire command of the Northwestern division, belonging to General Atkinson, who was a member, and who spoke of Colonel Taylor in high terms, as the only man who could end the war. After the Court had adjourned, General Atkinson resumed his command, and the Colonel received a furlough, but had not been at home a fortnight ere he was ordered to join General Jesup at Tampa Bay. Government found that something more than profound military science was necessary. — "The first quality of a soldier," said Napoleon, "is constancy in enduring fatigue and hardship — courage is the second."

The high expectation which the Government had of Colonel Taylor's success is shown in the fact that, immediately on his arrival, he was placed in command of a separate column, composed of the 1st, 4th, and 6th Infantry, a battery of light artillery and the Missouri volunteers. The latter

had, to use a common phrase, come "to see the Elephant," and we extract one from numerous anecdotes of Taylor's good natured way of governing these "citizen soldiers," contrasting with the autocratical airs assumed by others "dressed in a little brief authority."

"Among the newly arrived volunteers was a full private, who, heartily sick of rainy weather, mud, and no shelter, first went to his captain with his complaints, but, meeting with no particular sympathy, resolved to have a talk with Colonel Taylor himself. Arrived at the commander's quarters, the Colonel was pointed out to him, but he was rather incredulous. "That old fellow Colonel Taylor? Nonsense!" Satisfied, however, that such was even the case, he marched up, and rather patronizingly opened his business.

"Colonel Taylor, I believe."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Colonel, I'm d—ish glad to see you — am, indeed." The Colonel returned the civility.

"Colonel, you'll excuse me, but since I've been here I've been doing all I could for you — have indeed; but the fact is the accommodations are very bad — they are indeed; mud, sir; *bleeged* to lie down in it, actually; and the fact is, Colonel, I'm a *gentleman's son*, and not used to it!"

The Colonel, no doubt, strongly impressed with the fact of having a *gentleman's son* in his army, expressed his regret that such an annoyance should ever exist, under any circumstances, in a civilized army.

"Well — but Colonel, what am I to do?"

"Why, really, I don't know, unless you take my place."

"Well, now, that's civil — 'tis, indeed. Of course don't mean to *turn you out*, but a few hours' sleep — a cot, or a bunk, or anything, would be so refreshing! Your place — where is it, Colonel?"

"Oh, just drop down — *anywhere about here* — any place about camp will answer!"

The look which the "gentleman's son" gave the Colonel was rather peculiar.

"Well, no wonder they call you 'Rough and Ready,' said he; and, amid the smiles of all but 'Rough and Ready' himself, the 'gentleman's son' returned to take his chance of the weather."

Having perfected his arrangements, Col. Taylor marched into the interior from Tampa Bay, in nearly an Eastern direction, with orders "to attack the enemy wherever found, or in whatever numbers." Passing through dense thickets of cypress and palmetto, over a wet soil, matted with rank herbage, Colonel Taylor perseveringly followed the savages into one of their most inaccessible fastnesses. "He came up with them," says the official report of General Jesup, "on the Okeechobee, attacked them, and in one of the best fought actions known to our history, gained a complete victory." The action is thus described by one of his biographers:

"On the 25th of December they reached a dense swamp, where the enemy were reported to be in force. Here they halted. A few stars more might bring them within range of a hidden foe — that foe might be on every side; and they, about to share the fate of Bala. Yet, led on by Colonel Taylor, no man desponded. The line of battle was formed, and these brave men pushed forward. To charge an 'exposed' foe, requires coolness and intrepidity; to charge a protected fort, is the test of veteran abilities; but to wade up to the middle in a swamp, where the rank grass is waving over head, and an unseen enemy on every side, implies a degree of courage possessed by few. Yet this duty was cheerfully undertaken by that little army. Forgetting all danger, only eager for action, the troops hurried forward with enthusiasm. Having proceeded about a quarter of a mile, they entered a wide slough, which seemed to forbid all further progress. Abandoning their horses, the troops buried themselves to the neck in the grass, wading through a four feet deep of slime and water. Suddenly the rustling of grass and splash of water were drowned in the reports of hundreds of rifles. The savages were close before them, having reserved their fire until their aim would be certain. There



was a pause, a shouting of orders, and then the men charged fearlessly on. Then another volley, and one officer after another sunk down pale in the agonies of death. All around was one blaze of fire, and yet no foe appeared. Mowed down by scores, their intrepid leaders bleeding on every side, and no chance of resisting, the front line faltered, then rolled back and broke. The Indians poured after them, yelling the war-whoop, and hurling one discharge after another on the fugitives, until they met the regular troops. Undismayed by aught around, these heroic men were treading on as coolly as though on parade. Unflinchingly their bosoms met the blasting discharges of the sa ages, and sunk amid the tangled grass, dying the waving blades with their life blood. Havoc raged among the 6th infantry to such a degree, that the dark, cool water beneath them grew warm and red with their blood, and every man of the foremost ranks was shot down. Their leader, the heroic Thompson, while shouting them on, received a mortal wound. Adjutant Center, Captain Van Swearingen, and Lieutenant Brooke, found graves beside him. Of five companies in the advance, every inferior officer was killed or disabled; and of one, only four men were uninjured. Still the battle shout went up echoing and breaking among those romantic glades—still peal after peal of rattling musketry hurled forth the torrents of death—and still, mangled and groaning, high bosoms sunk among the sedge reeds, while the life-blood oozed blacker and thicker between the blades. Amid the horrors of that awful hour, Taylor was rushing from rank to rank, exhorting his heroes to the charge, and thrilling every heart with enthusiasm. Now the savages broke in disorder; then they paused, rallied, and rolled back on their pursuers, with a fury that appeared irresistible. Again they were broken, again they rallied, till the whole swamp seemed to boil with the rapid movements. Onward, faster and firmer, Taylor led his shouting heroes, bearing down opposing hosts, and sweeping every thing before them. The ground was mashed into pools beneath their feet, and the foe were lying in heaps on every side.

"At length the Indians were driven from their position to their camp on the borders of Lake Okeechobee. Here their flank was turned by Lieutenant Colonel Davenport, and immediately after they delivered a final volley and fled. The pursuit was continued until night.

"The loss of the Americans in this battle was fourteen officers and one hundred and twenty-four men; that of the Indians was not ascertained."

This signal victory confirmed Colonel Taylor's high military reputation; but, while admiring his gallant and intrepid conduct on the field of battle, it is more pleasing to see, by his own report, the tender solicitude he displayed for the wounded. A great objection urged against military men is, that the scenes of carnage in which they destroy their fellow-creatures, blunt all their tender sensibilities. But the following extract from Colonel Taylor's report shows that his heart was yet alive to suffering, and prompt to alleviate it:—

"As soon as the enemy were completely broken, [official report of Okeechobee.] I turned my attention to taking care of the wounded, to facilitate their removal to my baggage, where I ordered an encampment to be formed. I directed Captain Taylor to cross over to the spot, and employ every individual whom he might find there, in constructing a small footway across the swamp. This, with great exertions, was completed in a short time after dark, when all the dead and wounded were carried over in litters made for the purpose, with one exception, a private of the 4th infantry, who was killed and could not be found.

"And here I trust I may be permitted to say, that I experienced one of the most trying scenes of my life, and he who could have looked on it with indifference, his nerves must have been differently organized from my own. Besides the killed, there lay one hundred and twelve wounded officers and soldiers, who had accompanied me one hundred and forty-five miles, most of the way through an unexplored wilderness, without guides, who had so gallantly beaten the enemy under my orders in his strongest position, and who had to be conveyed back, through swamps and hammocks, from whence we set out, without any apparent means of doing so. This service, however, was encountered and overcome, and they have been conveyed thus far, and proceeded on to Tampa Bay, on rude litters constructed with the knife and axe alone, with poles and dry hides—the latter being

found in great abundance at the encampment of the hostiles. The litters were carried on the backs of our weak and tottering horses, aided by the residue of the command, with more ease and comfort to the sufferers than I could have supposed, and with as much as they could have been in ambiances of the most improved and modern construction."

At the time, no particular praise was awarded to Colonel Taylor for this humane conduct; but a renewal of it in after years brought an eloquent tribute from Senator Clayton, which will not be inappropriate here:—"I say, therefore, that, from the bottom of my heart, I thank the brave, generous and merciful commander of the American troops. I thank him, sir, not only for his gallantry and skill, his conduct and bravery, but eminently and above all other considerations, as an American Senator, I thank him for his humanity! I honor him, because he thought of, and spared, feeble and unoffending woman, in that hour of her utmost peril. I honor him, because he spared tottering age and helpless infancy; and I glory that an American officer has shown himself thus alive to the best feelings of the human heart."

It was at this battle that Colonel Taylor is said to have used profane language; though men who have been with him in scenes the most trying, and under the most provoking circumstances, declare that he never is guilty of uttering an oath. Major Gaines, of Kentucky, said in his speech at Faneuil Hall:—"Taylor does not swear. I have known him long, have slept in his tent, and been on the most intimate terms with him; yet I never heard him utter a profane word. Once, though, I remember his telling me he was sorely tried. It was at the battle of Okeechobee, where the Missouri volunteers were so hard pressed, that they fell into disorder, and finally retreated. 'Where are you going?' asked Colonel Taylor, riding up to their head. They said they had been ordered to retreat. 'You lie, you scoundrels!' answered Taylor. 'And,' said old Zack, 'I believe I cursed them.'"

Washington, says one of his eulogists, possessed such violent passions as rarely inhabit the human breast. Several times in his varied and active life, when he was surprised by the gross cowardice or misconduct of individuals on whom he had relied, the storm gathered on his brow, usually so serene, and wrath flashed forth like lightning—as terrible, yet as transient—for in an instant he was himself again. Thus controlled, (and the remark will apply as well to Taylor as to Washington,) this impetuosity should not perhaps be regarded as a failing, but rather as a trial, given, like other trials, to afford opportunity for triumph, glorious in proportion to the strength of the glory subdued. Thus controlled, what does the violence of the tempest prove, but the divinity of the virtue which rides in and rules it?

The important consequences of the battle of Okeechobee—which, in any other country, would have terminated the war—were

thus summed up by Colonel Taylor in his report, on returning to the coast:—

"This column, in six weeks penetrated one hundred and fifty miles into the enemy's country, opened roads, and constructed bridges and causeways, when necessary, on the greater portion of the route; established two depots and the necessary defences for the same, and finally overtook and bent the enemy in his strongest position. The results of which movement and battle have been, the capture of thirty of the hostiles, the coming in and surrendering of more than one hundred and fifty Indians and negroes—mostly of the former, including the chiefs On-la-too-gee, Tus-ta-nug-gee, and other principal men—the capturing and driving out of the country six hundred head of cattle, upwards of one hundred head of horses, besides obtaining a thorough knowledge of the country through which we operated, a greater portion of which was entirely unknown, except to the enemy."

A general order, signed by the Commander-in-Chief, was issued to the Army, complimenting Colonel Taylor and his officers for their gallantry, and tendering them the thanks of the President. This official acknowledgment of Taylor's bravery was followed, on the 25th of December, 1837, by a commission of Brevet Brigadier General, "for distinguished services at the battle of Okeechobee." He was, at the same time, ordered to take up his position at Fort Bassinger; and we give an anecdote of him while stationed here, that is as amusing as it is characteristic:—

"The General had a favorite horse, which he called 'Claybank,' a very fine animal, and much attached to his master. But he did not much fancy the musty corn often furnished the troops. The General used to partake of the same fare as his soldiers, and so did Claybank, so far as the corn was concerned, and they were both equally dainty. The General was very fond of hominy, and musty corn made anything but a pleasant diet. He would subject himself to the suspicion of 'picking,' to the prejudice of the soldiers, rather than eat it, when not compelled to. Finding that Claybank understood that business better than he did, he would quietly let him loose amongst the sacks of corn. After smelling very carefully, the sagacious animal would commence gnawing a hole in one that pleased him. The General would patiently watch the manoeuvre until he saw that Claybank had made a choice, then calling his servant, he would direct him to have 'Claybank stabled immediately, for fear he might do mischief; 'but,' he would say, 'as the animal has caught a hole in the bag, take out a quart or so of the corn, and make a dish of hominy.' The trick was played for some time, but at last it became known, that whenever Claybank gnawed into a sack, sweet corn was to be found there, and the incident became a standing joke during the war, and it was enjoyed by none more heartily than by the subject of it himself."

On the 15th of March, 1838, General Jesup relinquished the command of the Army of Florida to General Taylor, who abandoned the plan of marching columns through the swamps, and commenced dividing the country into military districts of twenty miles square. In the centre of each, or at the most eligible point, a blockhouse was built, and garrisoned by twenty or thirty men, a part of them mounted. These were to make daily scouting expeditions, and the officer in command was held responsible that the hammocks of his district contained no Indians. The General used to visit these blockhouses when least expected, keeping their garrisons on the alert, and exhibiting a personal courage which made the Indians regard him as a charmed man. The following anecdote illustrates this singular disregard of danger:

"General Taylor never hesitated to move about unattended, and, generally, when riding out on important business, he kept a mile or two ahead of his escort. No matter how many Indians were prowling about, the old General seemed unconscious that they would harm him, and often, when only armed parties could escape attack, General Taylor would trust himself alone, under some wide spreading tree, in close proximity with the enemy, and thus circumstanced, he would eat his frugal meal, and if desirable, indulge in a sound sleep. At the time the Indians were most troublesome to our troops, General Taylor announced his determination to go from Fort King to Tampa Bay, which journey would take him through nearly one hundred miles of hostile country. The jaunt was considered, by every body, as a most desperate adventure. The morning for starting came, when the General's travelling companions, Major Bliss and a young lieutenant, began to look wistfully around for the escort. In due time, six dragons, all saddled and bridled, made their appearance. There was a force to meet several thousand wild Seminoles, who filled up every nook and corner between Fort King and Tampa Bay! After some hesitation, one of the General's friends suggested that the escort was insufficiently strong, and that a requisition should be made for a greater force. The General examined the appearance of the six dragons, attentively, for a moment, and then remarked, if the number was not sufficient, two more might be added to it."

The general orders issued from the War Department, in November, 1839, announced that "General Taylor, by the zealous and intelligent discharge of his duties, having given satisfaction to the Department, he will continue in command." During another year he continued to carry out his system of warfare, by means of which many small parties were captured or voluntarily surrendered. Yet as the number of the savages diminished, the vindictive cruelty of the survivors increased. Fathers were shot in the presence of their families, the heads of infants were dashed against stones before their mothers, the white flag enticed victims into ambush, and incendiary fires lighted the yelling barbarians in their fiendish deeds. The boldest hearts became discouraged, and one who served there may be permitted to say, that as an officer went about at the head of his small command of ragged scouts, he resembled a bandit chief more than a defender of a civilized country. "The only stars over his head were the stars of heaven, the only stripes were lacerated feet, by wading swamps and saw-palmetto hammocks, and the only sound which welcomed him home after his toils, was the vulgar abuse of the inexperienced." Fifteen hundred and forty-nine gallant spirits passed to another and better world, where every man is rewarded according to his deserts.

The noble example of General Taylor sustained his men among their perils hard-

\* Major Bliss is the son of Captain John Bliss, who, with his wife, were natives of Lebanon, New Hampshire, but moved to Whitehall, New York, just before the last war, where W. W. S. Bliss was born. After serving through it, Captain Bliss went to Mobile Point, to superintend the building of fortifications, where he shortly after died. His widow returned to Lebanon, where her greatest care was to watch the budding of the mind of her only son, and to train him for future usefulness. In the fall after he was fourteen years of age, he went to West Point, where, in due time, he graduated, and has since become distinguished in the service of his country. He was ever his mother's pride, and he delighted to honor her, as all truly noble men do. But his last visit, covered with glory won in Mexico, proved the cause of her death. It was an event which she had anticipated with a great deal of pleasure, and she spent the afternoon of the occasion. Of Major Bliss, as General Taylor's favorite aid, it may be said—"Like master, like man."



ships, and no one could think of complaining, after seeing his small tent, which we should like to see reproduced, side-by-side with the gilded saloons in the rue Matignon, where Lewis Cass, then Minister at Paris, entertained his aristocratic friends. There must have been a difference, also, in the personal appearance of the two;—one decked out in the gold-embroidered *court livery*, which Franklin refused to put on, but which Cass not only wore himself, but made all his countrymen whom he presented at Court wear, to please the regal ideas of his friend, that false democrat, Louis Philippe. The other, less ambitious, is portrayed in the following capital story:—

"During the Florida campaign, a certain young officer, after receiving his commission, was ordered to join the army in that quarter. His first duty was, of course, to report himself to General Taylor. After a very tedious journey, however, through the woods, our officer arrived at a small shanty, called a tavern, about fifty miles from head-quarters, where he thought proper to stay three days. There were only two visitors there besides himself. One of them, an oddish, shabby-looking man, with a black hat, minus part of the crown, and a piece of twine for a ribbon, was very inquisitive, and, among other things, asked our officer what excuse he intended to make for his delay in reporting himself to the General.

"Oh," said the officer, "they say Taylor is a very easy old soul, and I can easily make up an excuse." On going to bed that night, the officer asked the landlord who that impudent, inquisitive old fellow was? "Why," said the host, "don't you know General Taylor?" About an hour afterwards, at midnight, the tramp of a horse's feet was heard, making quick tracks towards head-quarters."

In 1840, General Taylor, at his own request, was relieved by General Armistead, and received a furlough, which he improved by visiting the New England States. His gentlemanly deportment while an inmate of the Maverick House, at East Boston, is well remembered by those who were there at the time with him, and they recall many complimentary remarks which he made after his solitary strolls through the Tremont city. This was not Lewis Cass's style of travelling. For he had Old Ironsides placed at his disposition, and sailed about the Mediterranean at Uncle Sam's expense, with his family and a suite of uniformed young gentlemen, whose conduct towards the gallant tars, who were thus subservient to a "democratic" pleasure seeker, was, if we mistake not, so resented that an appeal to arms was talked of.

General Taylor was too valuable a man to be permitted to remain idle, and he was appointed to the command of the first Military Division, which includes the South-western frontier. Fort Jesup was for two years his head-quarters, and the chaplain furnishes valuable testimony as to his moral character, for there was the place to study it. In garrison, away from civilization, men are seen in their true light—every good or bad trait manifesting itself—and the following plain statements are golden proofs.

"General Taylor was two years at Fort Jesup, as the commander of 1000 men, many of whom were among the worst of the race; in that fort, swearing was as common as plumes; the very moral sense seemed to demand an oath as a test of a gentleman. The chaplain who was with Gen. T. during his whole command, and saw him under circumstances of the greatest provocation, says he never heard an oath from his lips. His principles and practice in this respect are known to the whole army."

"Gen. Taylor is a strict teetotaller. He conforms to the customs of the army, and keeps on his side-board such liquors as are drunk in the army; but he pledges his officers only in cold water. At the close of a parade, it is etiquette on the part of the officers to call at head-quarters and pay respect to the commander-in-chief. It is etiquette on the part of the commander to allow the officers to drink his health. It has been Gen. Taylor's custom for years, to pour out his glass of cold water, and drink the health of his staff alone. When he assumed the command of Fort Jesup, he found intemperance to be the prevailing sin. Whipping, imprisonment and fines had been exhausted. It was proposed to attempt to reform the men. Gen. Taylor gave the chaplain his warm co-operation by authority and example. A change was seen at once; and in less than two years, more than 600 reformed men marched in procession, with badges and banners. So, of them who joined the army because of their intemperance, obtained their discharge through Gen. Taylor, and returned home to their families sober men. Some of them are in good business in Boston at this time."

"Gen. Taylor is a friend to the Sabbath and to public worship. You cannot judge men severely who are in the hands of committees, as Gen. Taylor was at New Orleans, on his return from Mexico. By such a rule J. Q. Adams, Mr. Webster, and others must be set down as enemies to the Sabbath; a single act, over which, as public men, they had no control, must weigh more than a long life. It is a common thing for officers in the army to take exercise on the Sabbath, by walking or riding after public worship. During the whole time Gen. Taylor was at Fort Jesup, the chaplain says he never saw General Taylor riding for exercise, nor so much as walking before his quarters. He regarded the Sabbath as essential to good order and morals, and he threw the force of his example fully in its favor. He was regular and devout at worship. Whenever the chaplain preached, whenever else was absent, Gen. Taylor was in his place."

How different would be the testimony of the chaplains who were stationed in the "Halls of the Montezumas" during the Governorship of General Butler, the Loco Foco candidate for the Vice Presidency, if called upon to state how he observed the Sabbath! If the correspondent of the New Orleans Crescent may be credited, (and "Chaparral's" letters have a truthful reputation,) the would-be Vice President, while Commander-in-Chief of our army, violated God's holy law by attending a horse-race on Sunday, and sank his official dignity by countenancing by his presence a party of gamblers. This gross act of immorality is chronicled in the following extract, which we commend to the particular attention of those enemies of Henry Clay, who persuaded many good Christians not to give him their votes, because, as they falsely asserted, he once played "poker" on board of a Mississippi steamer on the Lord's day.

"There was a regular row at the race course on Sunday. Many persons were out there, and among them the General-in-Chief. There was some foul riding or jockeying, which caused many fights and bloody noses. A party of gamblers made a race, and entered a fine horse, which was the favorite with everybody, and everybody tried to bet on him—some going as high as five to one—but the favorite didn't win, and the jockeying was so palpable that a row was commenced at once. The stand gave way while Gen. Butler was upon it, but fortunately no one was seriously hurt."

In May, 1845, it was whispered that President Polk intended to secure his reelection by plunging the nation into a bloody and expensive contest, a fatal step which he was urged on to take by Lewis Cass, who declared that "*we might swallow the whole of Mexico without being hurt by it.*" How different are the sentiments of General Taylor, who, too old and brave a soldier to be dazzled by that phantom called military glory,



is ready, (we quote his own words,) to "sincerely rejoice at the prospect of PEACE. My life, (he says,) has been devoted to arms, yet I look upon war at all times and under all circumstances, as a national calamity, to be avoided if compatible with national honor. The principles of our Government, as well as its true policy, are opposed to the subjugation of other nations, and the dismemberment of other countries by conquest. In the language of the great Washington, 'why should we quit our own to stand on foreign ground?'" Had these sound views been carried out by President Polk, the country would not have been involved in debt, nor would thousands have mourned over the cruel losses which they have sustained. But there "is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will," and so Mr. Polk found it when he overlooked General Scott, lest he should win new laurels and become a dangerous rival for the Presidency, to place a man little known in command. General Coombs says that he firmly believes that it is an overruling Providence that has baffled all the schemes of aggrandisement and usurpation, which the authors of this war originated for their own benefit. General Scott was "headed," but General Taylor went forward to the discharge of his duty, and won the fame and confidence which, in spite of the intentions of President Polk, has made him the very rival he so much feared!

General Taylor's first orders from the Secretary of War, after the President had determined to commence hostilities on his own responsibility, directed him to have the forces under his command, or which might be assigned to it, put into a position which would enable him to give Texas "a defence from foreign invasion and Indian incursions." Subsequent instructions gave him as an ultimate point, the Rio Grande del Norte, as "Texas must be protected from hostile invasion," and he left for that point, relinquishing the pleasure he had anticipated from seeing his son, then in college at New-Haven. That he little thought it was the intention of Government to place him in a dangerous position, with only troops enough to tempt the Mexicans to attack him, and then to commence an aggressive war, is evident from his last despatch to the War Department, prior to his sailing from New-Orleans.

NEW ORLEANS, July 20, 1845.

SIR: I respectfully acknowledge your communication of July 8, covering the instructions of the Secretary of War of the same date, relative to the Mexican settlements on this side of the Rio Grande. Those instructions will be closely obeyed; and the department may rest assured that I will take no step to interrupt the friendly relations between the United States and Mexico. I am gratified at receiving these instructions, as they confirm my views, previously communicated, in regard to the proper line to be occupied at present by our troops.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The army of occupation passed six months in camp at Corpus Christi, where General

Taylor drilled his new forces into a state of admirable discipline, and inspired them by his frank and gallant bearing with that confidence in their leader which contributes so largely to military success. Nor was he less mindful of the morals of his men, breaking up the faro-banks and grogeries which a gang of rowdy camp-followers repeatedly endeavored to establish clandestinely, until the General's patience was exhausted.—"Take those sporting men," said he to an officer, "and send them where they will not bother us any more." "But where can I send them, General?" "Oh! anywhere. Send them to the United States." In March, 1846, the General crossed the vast wilderness lying between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, fording a wide arm of the sea, which the Mexicans threatened to defend, but retreated on the approach of the Americans. "While on this march," says the General, in an official letter, "it was my earnest desire to execute my instructions in a pacific manner—to observe the utmost regard for the personal rights of all citizens, and to take care that the religion and customs of the people should suffer no violation." Arriving at Point Isabel, the Americans found the buildings set on fire, and the Mexican authorities treating them as enemies; yet General Taylor had no wish to precipitate his country into a bloody war, and we find him writing to the Mexican commander:

"Notwithstanding these repeated assurances on the part of the Mexican authorities, and notwithstanding the most obviously hostile preparations on the right bank of the river, accompanied by a rigid non-intercourse, I carefully abstained from any act of hostility—determined that the onus of producing an actual state of hostilities should not rest with me. Our relations remained in this state until I had the honor to receive your note of the 12th inst., in which you denounce war as the alternative of my remaining in this position. As I could not, under my instructions, recede from my position, I accepted the alternative you offered me, and made all my dispositions to meet it suitably."

Establishing a depot at Point Isabel, General Taylor pursued his march up the left bank of the Rio Grande, and on the 28th of March planted the national flag opposite Matamoras, where he erected Fort Brown. Hostilities were now commenced by an attack on a reconnoitering party, and it soon becoming evident that it was the intention of the Mexicans to capture Point Isabel, General Taylor resolved on marching to relieve it with his whole force, except a small garrison left in the fort. This the Mexicans exulted over as a *retreat*.

On the evening of the 7th of May, Gen. Taylor set out from Point Isabel, at the head of twenty-one hundred men, with a full determination to fight the Mexicans, if they opposed his return to Fort Brown, whose deep-mouthed cannon were heard at intervals,—

"Giving proof through the night that our flag was still there,"

The troops bivouacked towards morning; and resuming their march at sunrise, came in sight of Arista's line at noon, drawn up in battle array, at the farther side of a prairie,

behind which rose a dwarfish wood, known as El Palo Alto. After an hour's rest, Gen. Taylor's forces advanced by columns toward the enemy:—

"Firm paced and slow, a fearless front they form;  
Still as the breeze but dreadful as the storm."

When within about seven hundred yards, the Mexican artillery opened their fire—Duncan's and Ringgold's batteries returned it—the cannonade became severe—the Mexican lancers advanced in terrible array—and after a fierce and sanguinary struggle, the American arms were crowned with victory. Six hundred Mexicans remained on the field, after their comrades had fled—but they were dead or wounded—while the American loss was but nine killed, and forty-four wounded. Such was the result of the first battle of the campaign—an action which astonished the trained veterans of Europe, and filled the heart of every true American with joy. Whether the war was just or unjust, Palo Alto's field proved that Americans, led by a brave chieftain, are capable of defending the "stars and stripes" against a fearful odds!

Sending his wounded back to Point Isabel under a strong guard, General Taylor advanced the next morning in battle array, and found the enemy awaiting him at La Resaca de la Palma, a ravine crossing the road at right angles, where they had thrown up breastworks. It was a daring act, to combat six thousand veterans, entrenched in a chosen position, strongly defended with artillery, with about two thousand; and there was some hesitation, in a council of war, about the propriety of going on. Gen. Taylor patiently heard what all had to say, and then drily remarked: "I promised the boys they should go to Fort Brown, and *they must go*." He had written to the Department, before leaving Point Isabel: "If the enemy oppose my march, in whatever numbers, I shall fight him;" and now laid his plans for attack with cool sagacity. An officer who had always been very prominent on parade and in councils of war, was ordered to deploy his regiment on the enemy's flank. Not over-delighted with the prospect of *escopeta* shots, the Colonel stammered out a request to know what his men should fall back on, if repulsed? "*They never will be repulsed*," said General Taylor; "and if *you* wish to retreat, *fall back on New Orleans!*"

The battle raged with intense fury; and loud above the sharp rattle of the musketry and the deep din of the artillery, was heard the loud cheering of the Americans, as Gen. Taylor inspired them with fresh ardor, by animated remarks and daring courage.

"—It was a glorious sight to see,  
For one who had no friend, no brother there."

And the bold charges of Captain May, whose dragoons dashed through the enemy's ranks like the wing of the destroying angel, decided the day. The Mexicans fled in great disorder, leaving their camp equipa-

ges and equipments. Their loss was estimated at one thousand; and General Vega, their bravest leader, was captured, and brought to General Taylor. Shaking his captive's hand, the victor kindly said to him: "I do assure you, General Vega, that I regret this misfortune has fallen upon *you*. I regret it sincerely, and insist on returning you the sword which you yielded up when captured, after having this day wielded it with so much gallantry." General Vega was an inmate of the commander's tent, until he was sent to New Orleans, carrying with him a letter of introduction to General Gaines from General Taylor, who also added a letter of credit on his banker.

While attentive to his own troops, General Taylor ordered the surgeons to attend to the wounded Mexicans, abandoned to die in lingering agony, saying: "Keep an account of all that you disburse for them, and of what medicine they have from the army chests—if the War Department grumble, I'll foot the bills." He then returned to Point Isabel, in order to arrange a combined attack on Matamoras, with Commodore Conner. Their interview is thus humorously described:—

"The singular simplicity that marks General Taylor's personal appearance and habits, has become a subject of universal fame. It is curious that a soldier, so eminent in all the qualities of discipline, should be so citizen-looking in his own appearance. Commodore Conner, on the contrary, is an officer that is not only strict in his dress, but has an extra nicety about it. He appears in full and splendid uniform on all public occasions—being the exact contrast, in this particular, of General Taylor."

"At the proper time, Commodore Conner sent word to General Taylor that he would come on shore to pay him a visit of ceremony. This put 'Old Rough and Ready' into a tremendous excitement. If Commodore Conner had quietly come up to his tent, and given him a sailor's grip, and sat down on a camp chest, and talked over matters in an old-fashioned way, General Taylor would have been prepared; but to have the most carefully dressed officer in our navy, commanding the finest fleet, come in full uniform—surrounded by all the glittering pomp of splendid equipments—to pay a visit of ceremony, was more than General Taylor had, without some effort, nerve, and go through with; but, ever equal to all emergencies, he determined to compliment Commodore Conner, and through him the navy, by appearing in *full uniform*—a thing his officers, associated with him for years, had never witnessed."

"In the meanwhile, Commodore Conner was cogitating over the most proper way to compliment General Taylor. Having heard of his peculiar disregard of military dress, he concluded he would make the visit in a manner comporting to General Taylor's habits, and consequently equipped himself in plain white drilling, and, unattended, came ashore."

"The moment that General Taylor heard that Commodore Conner had landed, he abandoned some heavy work he was personally attending to about the camp, and precipitately rushed into his tent, delved at the bottom of an old chest, and pulled out a uniform coat, that had peacefully slumbered for years in undisturbed quietude, slipped himself into it, in his haste fastening it so that one side of the standing collar was three button holes above the other, and sat himself down as uncomfortable as he can well be imagined. With quiet step, and unattended, Commodore Conner presented himself at General Taylor's tent. The noble representatives of the army and navy shook hands, both in exceeding astonishment at each other's personal appearance."

"The wages of the army say that the above contains the only *authentic* account of General Taylor's ever being 'breeched,' and that since that time, he has taken to linen roundabouts of the largest dimensions, with more pertinacity than ever."

Matamoras surrendered without a struggle, and the regimental bands struck up "Yankee Doodle," as the "stars and stripes"



were raised upon Fort Paredes. Had Government supported the gallant hero who had thus fought two pitched battles, and terminated a campaign in twelve days, he would have continued his victorious march. But Mr. Polk was bent on giving "aid and comfort" to the enemy, by placing Santa Anna at their head, and affording them time to recruit their strength, by keeping General Taylor inactive. When the newly raised volunteers did arrive, there were no means of transportation, and General Taylor was obliged to wait patiently, encamped on the river bank.

Samuel C. Reid, Esq. thus narrates a morning call at head-quarters:—

"Calling on the Commanding General soon after our recovery, to ascertain the chances of transportation, he remarked, after some pleasant conversation, that he was perfectly deluged with letters, and that much of his time was occupied in making replies.—  
"And sir," said General Taylor, smiling, as he handed us two letters, "to show you the diversity of subjects that I am called upon to respond to, you may look at these." One of the letters was from a boy, fourteen years of age, giving a sort of history of himself and family, and who desired to enlist in the service, and had written to the General to ask his advice on the subject! The other was from an Irish woman, who wanted to know if her son *Mike was killed*, as she had not heard from him since the late battles. We feel sure that such letters would not have received attention at Washington, but both of them were answered by the General, carrying out the maxim that *nothing is beneath the notice of a great man*; and we left him, impressed with the great goodness of his heart."

Good Whigs will take more interest in reading Colonel Haskell's account of a visit to the same tent, in which General Taylor boldly declared his adhesion to those good old Whig principles for which his father fought in the Revolution. We give Colonel Haskell's "unvarnished tale," as reported from a speech he made in Georgetown, D.C.:

"I have seen General Taylor in storm and in sunshine. I have seen him at home and in a foreign land—under every variety of circumstance, and I therefore know something about him. It has been said that Gen. Taylor is not a Whig. I know better. And they know better. He is a Whig; not an ultra Whig. I would rather he should be a good, plain, simple, straight forward, reasonable Whig, than a full ultra Whig. I recollect an incident on this subject, which, with your permission, I will be glad to tell you. (Cries of Go on—Go on.) I joined as a private in the American army in the late Mexican war, and was landed at Brazos Santiago. Well, there being nothing particular to do there, I thought that I would not like to go home without seeing old Rough and Ready, and that I would like to be able to give some account, in writing home, of what kind of a man he was—in fact, who he was—where he was from—how old he was—who he had married—and what his politics. I set out. I went from Point Isabel and passed over the battle fields of Resaca and Palo Alto, now all under water, submerged. I passed the battle ground and had my horse swimming—and at length I reached the camp at Matamoras.

"I began to look out for the tent of General Taylor. But I must first state, from the mud and dirt—from the impossibility of keeping clean in Mexico, and the probability that I was the dirtiest white man that was ever seen in that country, that I could not expect much. I mention this to show what kind of a man the General was. I had imagined the Old Hero whose fame had spread abroad around the country, to be surrounded with some pomp and splendor, and with all paraphernalia of authority and power. But I could see no such marked distinction. Presently, I saw a young officer ride up on a full blooded charger, and present with much form, a Report to a plain, country-looking man, with an honest, blunt face. This, said I, must be Old Zach himself. Sir, said I, have I the honor to see Gen. Taylor? I am Gen. Taylor, said he. I am a private, sir, and I have great pleasure in seeing you, and wish to have a talk with you. I wish to know how old

you are; where you were born; who did you marry; and what are your politics? I saw that he was the correct individual, and I could talk right straight before him. He asked me to set down on the bench before the door. He said that he would tell me all that he knew, which, he said, would pass for very little. And I asked him again to tell me, and when he got through, says I, General, what is your politics? And he laughed a kind of quiet laugh out of his little eyes, and he says, I AM A WHIG AND A QUARTER OVER! Well now, I had been lately all over Tennessee, electioneering for Harry of the West, and when I heard of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, thought that perhaps the Old Hero would bear the stars and stripes to victory in the next civil, as he had done in the military contest. And when I heard the old General come out in that plain, blunt way, why, in return for it, I became a Zachary Taylor man and a quarter over."

Steamers had been brought from the U. S., and General Taylor having occasion to go down to Point Isabel in one, granted a passage to a large number of discharged sick and wounded, and while he had a fine suite of state rooms, they were uncomfortably stowed away on deck. It was cold and rainy, and General Taylor, finding that "the boys" were suffering, ordered them to be placed in his state rooms, while he put on the "old brown coat," which used to be famous in Florida, and went strolling about the boat, unknown to the crew. The wind blew high, and the firemen had raised a sail in front of the boilers, to protect themselves from the rain, to the leeward of which Gen. Taylor lay down on an old mattress, brought up from the bunks to air, and was soon fast asleep. At supper time there was great enquiry for the Commander-in-Chief, but no one could tell where he was, until a waiter asked a fireman. "I haven't seen no General," was the reply, "but there's a clever old fellow asleep by the sail there." It was the conquering General of the American Army, sleeping in the open air, on the forward deck of a steamer, while his berth and room were occupied by poor sick soldiers—without rank,—but receiving his consideration because they had been disabled in the service of his country!

In September, General Taylor, (now full Major General, by act of Congress,) set out for Monterey, a city admirably adapted to defensive warfare. The streets being straight, a few pieces of artillery can command their entire length, while the stone walls of the houses, rising above the roofs, they form parapets for the protection of sharp shooters. Each dwelling is thus a separate castle, and with the extensive forts, form one grand fortification, suggested by nature and consummated by art. Though unprovided with heavy artillery, General Taylor determined to carry the place by storm, and advancing boldly, came in sight of the town on the 19th of September. The army, wrote a young soldier, were in fine spirits, each volunteer's heart beating high with the assurance of victory, and longing for the hour to come which would crown them with distinction, or sacrifice them to their country. Advancing in solid battalions, and moving as it were like the ocean's swell, with the sun's rays glittering upon the arms of the dark and serried ranks, and the bright artillery flashing in the midst, they formed a



noble pageantry. As the army moved on, General Taylor and staff were seen advancing to the head of the column. A low murmur of admiration rose in the ranks as the General passed, bowing to both men and officers, who saluted him as he rode by. It was reported that that invincible old man was to lead them forth to battle, and while all knew that there was a fearful preponderance of numbers in the town, the *prestige* of a victorious name inspired an indomitable courage, which brought victory.

To describe the storming of Monterey would fill a volume, and then but an imperfect idea could be given of this desperate and bloody conflict. Troops who had never been in action before maintained a desperate struggle against a secret and inaccessible foe, burrowing their way through the thick walls of the houses, planting batteries on almost inaccessible heights, and forcing the enemy to sue for a cessation of hostilities. Throughout the fight "Old Zach" had been in the most exposed situations, yet he was as cool and as calm as ever, though his men longed for the hour of revenge, and were at first maddened with disappointment on hearing that a capitulation had been granted. But what thought General Taylor? mark well his words: "The result would have been the escape of the body of the Mexican force, with the destruction of its artillery and magazines, our only advantage being the capture of a few prisoners of war, at the expense of valuable lives and much damage to the city. The consideration of HUMANITY was present to my mind during the conference which led to the convention, and outweighed in my judgment, the doubtful advantages to be gained by a resumption of the attack upon the town."

President Polk formally disapproved of General Taylor's humane capitulation, but public opinion sustained him, and loudly rebuked an iniquitous scheme for giving some leading politician the supreme command over him. This was first announced by President Polk, in his message of the 4th of January, 1847, in which he told Congress that the large number of *inefficient and incapable* field officers had already "produced serious injury to the public service; that, therefore, the number of officers 'in the higher grades' must be increased; and especially, that the appointment of a general officer to command the whole was indispensable to an 'efficient organization of the army.'" These suggestions can import nothing but a charge of incompetency, not merely against a large number of the *field officers*, but particularly against General Taylor and General Scott. The President's meaning was very distinctly disclosed in the House, by two of his right hand supporters, Messrs. Ficklin and Jacob Thompson, both of whom, in advocating the appointment of a Lieutenant General, assailed those officers, as being unfit to conduct the war, and certainly unfit to conduct it *with advantage to the Democratic party*. The degrada-

tion of being superseded was designed more especially for General Taylor than for General Scott; because Taylor was already in the field, had won three glorious battles, and was ready to go on with his campaign; whilst Scott was kept at Washington. With the specific object, then, of degrading from his well-earned rank the man whose wonderful resources had almost miraculously saved the arms of his country from disgrace on three several occasions, this proposition for the creation of a Lient. General (who, it afterwards appeared, was to be the famous *Thomas Hart Benton*, of Missouri.) was placed before Congress. It was sustained in the Senate by Lewis Cass, who is now presented as the antagonist of the man upon whom he then sought to inflict the deepest injury which can be visited upon a military officer. Will not every *lover of peace and humanity*, by voting for General Taylor, endorse the capitulation of Monterey?

We now come to the crowning victory of Buena Vista. After General Taylor had been deprived of the tried regulars who had received his own impress, a council of war was summoned, at which some said "go on," others "turn back;" but General Taylor was aware that if he ordered his raw volunteers to retreat for protection to Monterey, they would become panic-struck. So he took the responsibility, and said, "*I'll not turn back—I'll fight him—the Council is adjourned until after the battle.*" The Mexicans were twenty thousand strong, commanded by their favorite Santa Anna, who had been graciously furnished by President Polk for the occasion. But Taylor, the People's General, though he might be *rough*, proved himself *ready* for the President's General, and his brave five thousand men felt that the presence of "old Zach" was an army in itself. The 22d of February—immortalized by the birth of him whose glory is a heritage worthy bold defence—brought the armies in contact, and General Taylor was summoned to surrender. Read his reply.

HEAD-QUARTERS, ARMY OF OCCUPATION,  
Near Buena Vista, February 22, 1847.

SIR: In reply to your note of this date, summoning me to surrender my forces at discretion, I beg leave to say that I decline acceding to your request.

With high respect, I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Major General U. S. Army, commanding.

SEÑOR GEN. D. ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA,  
Commander-in-chief, La Encantada.

The American army seemed endowed with the real old Puritan spirit, and we are told of a Methodist clergyman, commanding a Mississippi company, who, when about to enter into action, halted his men, stretched forth his hands and prayed: "O Lord, who through thy servant Joshua commanded the Sun to stand still upon Gibeon, and the Moon in the valley of Ajalon, so do thou now be with us, thy servants, and enable us to smite the greasers of Mexico, hip and thigh. So mote it be.—Amen.—Company, front face, forward march!" The Kentucky

volunteers, who had been promised a chance "to dance by their own music," performed prodigies of valor, and three successive times recovered their flag when it was captured. "That flag went down to the fight all gay and glittering in beauty, like a bride arrayed for the wedding—but it came back to Kentucky all tattered and soiled—like that bride returning to her father's home a widow, whose brow was wrinkled by years of sorrow and corroding care in the rough jostle of life—but the more welcomed for the trial endured." The Whig flag will yet float in triumph over the Hero of Buena Vista, whose personal conduct during that important struggle is thus described by Lieutenant Corwin:—

"At a time when the fortunes of the day seemed extremely problematical—when many of our side even despaired of success—the General took his position on a commanding height, overlooking the two armies. This was about three or perhaps four o'clock in the afternoon. The enemy, who had succeeded in gaining an advantageous position, made a fierce charge upon our column, and fought with a desperation that seemed for a time to insure success to their arms. The struggle lasted for some time. All the while General Taylor was a silent spectator, his countenance exhibiting the most anxious solicitude, alternating between hope and despondency. His staff, perceiving his perilous situation, (for he was exposed to the fire of the enemy,) approached him and implored him to retire. He hesitated them not. His thoughts were intent on one victory or defeat. He knew not at this moment what the result would be. He felt that that engagement was to decide his fate. He had given all his orders and selected his position. If the day went against him he was irretrievably lost; if for him, he could rejoice in common with his countrymen, at the triumphant success of our arms.

"Such seemed to be his thoughts—his determination. And when he saw the enemy give way and retreat in the utmost confusion, he gave free vent to his pent-up feelings. His right leg was quickly disengaged from the pommel of the saddle, where it had remained during the whole of the fierce encounter—his arms, which were calmly folded over his breast, relaxed their hold—his feet fairly danced in the stirrups, and his whole body was in motion. It was a moment of the most exciting and intense interest. His face was suffused with tears. The day was won—the victory complete—his little army saved from the disgrace of a defeat, and he could not refrain from weeping for joy at what had seemed to so many, but a moment before, as an impossible result. Long may the noble and kind-hearted old hero live to enjoy the honors of his numerous and brilliant victories, and many other honors that a grateful country will ere long bestow upon him."

Twice the sun rose and set on the contending armies, "ere the red field was won," and the standard of the Republic waved triumphantly in North Mexico. Long will Buena Vista be remembered in the history of our country, for on no page is as yet recorded so deadly a struggle, fought against such fearful odds. Coming ages will muse upon its important issues, its terrible changes, its sickening slaughter, with astonishment and awe—and the name of him who won it will be inscribed high upon the Temple of American Glory. We cannot close this imperfect account of his military life, in words more felicitous and eloquent than are to be found in the following extract from a sermon, preached by the Rev. Burdett Hart, Pastor of the Congregational Church, in Fairhaven, Conn.:—

"We have seen an officer, whose name was almost unknown, who at the early age of eighteen entered the army of the United States as a Lieutenant of Infantry, who in the war of 1812 and in the Florida campaigns displayed the qualities of heroic daring

and soldierly science, which have since been matured to a perfect development, taking the foremost position among the Captains of this or any other age.— Brave in the hour of danger, humane in the moment of victory, kind and courageous in the varied scenes of his warrior-life, he possesses the qualities which attract the attention, and demand the admiration of mankind. Plain, almost to an excess, in his manners and costume, he still commands the homage and confidence of his troops. Impressed with the sentiment of his own invincibility, they never waver in the fiercest conflicts, and under his guiding genius fresh recruits bear to the battle-field the cool courage and unawed spirit of veterans. In the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, along the blazing lines at the storming of Monterey, and amid the bloody and terrible scenes of Buena Vista, he still displays the same fruitfulness of resource and energy in action, which distinguish the great commander. His brilliant victories have been heralded through the land, and the name, which nineteen months ago, was hardly known and hardly uttered, has been heard on every lip, and uttered with all the familiarity of a household word. Already he has gained to his advocacy and support, a vast amount of influence and worth for the highest position in the gift of a free people, and at times has seemed likely to unite in harmony the conflicting elements which sunder the political world. The warrior chieftains of Europe, dazzled with his deeds and astonished at his facilities, have followed his victorious course with enthusiasm and admiration, although in its originality and boldness it has overthrown their principles of warfare, and demolished that science which ages of experience had treasured."

We have now sketched the unobtrusive career of General Taylor, up to the close of his campaigns in Mexico, comprising nearly half a century of faithful public service, during which he has imperceptibly moulded himself into that character of which Washington was the prototype. Upon our wild Western frontiers, in the swamps of Florida or the chapparals of Mexico, wherever the exigencies of the Republic have called him, from boyhood to old age, his life has been devoted to his country—his only reward has been the glory reflected from her happiness and security. But when the attention of THE PEOPLE was directed towards him by his crowning achievements in Mexico, they determined to bestow upon him the highest office in their power—not merely as a reward for past good service—but that his patriotism, integrity, and capacity qualified him to lead them in an attempt to relieve the Republic from that maelstrom of ruin and corruption, into which a disastrous administration has plunged it, and thus fill the measure of his glory. Had Washington never been invested with civil office, his military virtues and achievements would, with few exceptions, have been the only portions of his life treasured in the memory of his countrymen; and it was thought that Taylor could conquer *General Misrule* with as much ease as he vanquished General Santa Anna. A man

"—Firm of word,  
Speaking in deeds, and deadless in his tongue;"

his past life was rich in promise that if elected President of the United States, his civil career would, by its exhibition of judgment, wisdom and vigor, be a more imperishable monument than his military triumphs.

The mails which carried to Mexico newspapers from every section of the Union, filled with accounts of the brilliant victories at Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey and Buena Vista, were burdened with hundreds of letters to their hero, a very large



proportion of them from persons unknown to him or to his officers. Some of the writers complimented the General on his gallant soldiery, others requested his autograph, but most of them wished him to become a candidate for the Presidency, and tendered their support, often hinting that a "consideration" would be demanded when he was in the White House. These would-be officials were treated with the silent contempt they deserved, and with that modesty which ever accompanies true merit, it was a long time before General Taylor would even listen to the calls from higher sources. "For the high honor and responsibilities of the Presidency," he wrote on the 18th of May, 1847, "I take occasion to say, I have not the slightest aspiration; a much more tranquil and satisfactory life, after the termination of my present duties, awaits me, I trust, in the society of my family and particular friends, and in the occupations most congenial to my wishes." The striking similarity of tone between this and one of General Harrison's letters, when he was first spoken of in connexion with the Presidency, is also to be found in the subsequent letters of each. Both were endeared to the people, on account of their unimpeached integrity and faithful public services — both had given guarantees, by their past conduct, that they would, if elected, use all the constitutional means of the government to restore the paralyzed prosperity of the country — and both, (as their letters published side by side in the newspapers show,) entertained the same Republican political views.

Far away from home, and surrounded by political renegades and other creatures of the President, who manifested a despicable jealousy of his rising fame, General Taylor was at first misled as to public opinion in the United States. He was induced to believe that a political millenium was at hand, and that *the masses*, weary of partizan strife, wished to shake off all old associations, and elect a *People's President*. If thus called to the Chief Magistracy, General Taylor cherished the idea that he could follow in the footsteps of Washington, and (says that true Whig, Thurlow Weed,) there was much in his character and much in his pursuits that led him to entertain such aspirations. Like Washington he had been trained to arms. Like Washington, he is a man of lofty patriotism, of mathematical integrity, and of stainless virtue.

Neither would it have been well for the General of an army, "serving in the field against a common enemy," to have taken a position in direct opposition to his commander-in-chief. Fully occupied with his responsible duties, and far removed from the political arena, it is not at all strange that General Taylor wished to do what he was told he might do: "go into the office untrammelled, and be the chief magistrate of the nation, and not of a party." His ideas at this time are clearly set forth, and merit perusal:

"As regards being a candidate for the Presidency at the coming election, I have no aspirations in that way, and regret the subject has been agitated at this early day, and that it had not been deferred until the close of this war, or until the end of the next session of Congress, especially if I am to be mixed up with it, as it is possible it may lead to the injury of the public service in this quarter, by my operations being embarrassed, as well as produce much excitement in the country, growing out of the discussion of the merits, &c., of the different aspirants for that high office, which might have been very much allayed, if not prevented, had the subject been deferred, as I suggested; besides, very many changes may take place between now and 1848, so much so, as to make it desirable for the interest of the country, that some other individual than myself, better qualified for the situation, should be selected; and could he be elected, I would not only acquiesce in such arrangement, but would rejoice that the Republic had one citizen, and no doubt there are thousands, more deserving than I am, and better qualified to discharge the duties of said office. If I have been named by others and considered a candidate for the Presidency, it has been by no agency of mine in the matter; and if the good people think my services important in that station, and elect me, I will feel bound to serve them, and all the pledges and explanations I can enter into and make, as regards this or that policy, is, that I will do so honestly and faithfully, to the best of my abilities, strictly in conformance with the Constitution."

Though he had been induced to believe that "old things had passed away" to such an extent that a "no Party" President could be elected, General Taylor never renounced the Republican principles which he had acquired in early youth. "I have no hesitation in stating," he wrote to Col. Mitchell, "as I have stated on former occasions, that I am a Whig, though not an ultra one; and that I have no desire to conceal this fact from any portion of the people of the United States." And what better Whig doctrine can be found than is embraced in the following compilation from his letters? —

"The power given by the constitution to the Executive, to interpose his veto, is a high conservative power, which should never be exercised except in cases of clear violation of the constitution, or manifest haste and want of consideration by Congress."

"The personal opinions of the individual who may happen to occupy the Executive chair, ought not to control the action of Congress upon questions of domestic policy, nor ought his objections to be interposed where questions of constitutional power have been settled by the various departments of government, and acquiesced in by the people."

"Upon the subjects of the tariff, the currency, the improvements of our great highways, rivers, lakes, and harbors, the will of the people, as expressed through their representatives in Congress, ought to be respected, and carried out by the Executive."

"War, at all times, and under all circumstances, is a national calamity, to be avoided, if compatible with national honor. The principles of our government, as well as its true policy, are opposed to the subjugation of other nations, and the dismemberment of other countries by conquest, for, in the language of the great Washington, 'why should we quit our own, to stand on foreign ground?'"

Returning to the United States, and freed from the restraint imposed upon him, General Taylor found that the political millenium was yet a long way off, and that the Administration was mustering its janizaries for the coming campaign, scattering, in its recruiting service, the public treasure with a prodigality unparalleled in the history of the Republic. The country whose honor he had so bravely defended, was in an embarrassed state, having spent, in prosecuting the war to which he was opposed, *one hundred and five millions of dollars!* Manufactures were depressed, confidence was shaken, the arm of industry was paralyzed. And why? Had not the times arrived contem-





plated in the following extract from Washington:—

"In a country like this, where equal liberty is enjoyed, where every man may reap his own harvest, which, by proper attention, will afford him much more than is necessary for his own consumption, and where there is so ample a field for mercantile and mechanical exertion, if there cannot be found money sufficient for the common purposes of life, not to mention the necessary commercial circulation, it is evident there is something amiss in the ruling political power, which requires a steady, regulating, energetic, honest hand to correct and control. Every man's experience will tell him when such a state of things exists; the most melancholy and unequivocal proof of it being a *general fall in the price of property*."

This "ruling political power," with its hireling legions, General Taylor evidently saw could only be routed by the Whig party, that glorious band which defeated the Tories in 1776, and the Locofocos in 1840. We accordingly find him writing on the 20th of May, 1848, to Messrs. Winchester and Saunders, two of his neighbors and friends, who were delegates to the Whig National Convention,—"I cannot withdraw my own name, for I did not place myself before the people as a candidate. But my friends can withdraw me, and in such withdrawal I shall cheerfully acquiesce." He stated that he recognized in the Louisiana Delegation friends who were authorized to withdraw him. And in conclusion he expressed the hope that his friends would go into the Whig National Convention "pledged heart and soul" to the support of its nominee, adding that the nominee would have his best wishes for success.

This placed General Taylor before the Whigs of the Union as a candidate for *their* suffrages; and to the many proofs of his true Whig principles, was added the testimony of the venerable Col. John Johnston, of Upper Piqua, Ohio, a delegate from Miami county to the Whig Convention, as he had been to Harrisburg, in 1840, and to Baltimore in 1844. Intimately acquainted with General Taylor for many years, he distinctly stated, that he had heard General Taylor declare, with much force, that he regarded slavery as a great evil to the country, and express a strong hope that the time might arrive when we could get rid of it altogether. Col. Johnston also declared his firmest conviction, that General Taylor "is the last man to countenance its being extended to any new territory that may be brought into the Union."

The delegates to the Whig National Convention were chosen by the Whig voters, and no one can dispute their title to represent the Whig party. It appeared, on balloting, that there were two hundred and eighty votes; and of these, *one hundred and sixty-eight—being a clear majority of fifty-six votes over those cast by the Southern delegates, and twenty-nine more than were necessary to choose a candidate—were cast by Northern delegates*. These Northern delegates might have nominated Webster, Clay, Scott, Corwin, or McLean, as they "held the game" in their own hands; but they refused to unite on any one of these gentlemen, and then sixty-

five of them secured

Taylor. Nor were these votes from any particular section of the North. Maine gave him 5; New-Hampshire, 2; Massachusetts, 1; Vermont, 2; Rhode-Island, 4; Connecticut, 3; New-York, 6; New-Jersey, 4; Pennsylvania, 12; Ohio, 1; Indiana, 7; Illinois, 8; Michigan, 2; Iowa, 4; and Wisconsin, 4. General Taylor is thus not only the Whig candidate, but the *candidate of the Northern Whigs*.

The position of the delegates at Philadelphia was one of high responsibility.—Each man had doubtless his sectional pride and personal feelings to influence him, but there was an overruling consideration. The enemy was in possession of the capitol—under whom could a change be effected? Who was there with pure integrity, tried patriotism, high abilities and known principles, who could rally the Whig forces, and inspire them with confidence? As in 1840, the Convention followed the example of the ancient Romans, and sought an American Cincinnatus, whose disinterested virtues, simplicity of manners, and long public services, had won for him a reputation, which, in the hour of peril, filled the hearts of his countrymen, and sent them to seek him in his tranquil home, to offer him the chief command of the Republic. They could say of him as they did of Harrison—the history of his life, as inscribed on the records of his country, is his recommendation—we have selected him because we know him by his deeds—we feel positive that a civic wreath will be added to the victorious crowns of him who "never surrenders."

Such has been the life, (as far as we have been hastily able to compile it,) of ZACHARY TAYLOR, who, still enjoying his untarnished fame, and occupying a position where the shafts of envy and malice cannot reach him, was nominated as the Whig Candidate for the Presidency—and recommended for the cordial support of every Whig. Some few, who had their certificates of desertion ready, let who would be nominated, chose to leave the party to whose generous confidence they owed every thing; but, continuing to follow the example of Arnold, they went over to the enemy alone. The great Whig army remain in the ranks where their fathers conquered, despite of individual treason, and hail the nomination with shouts that reverberate from the rocky coast of New England to the orange groves of Florida, mingle with the rushing sound of the Mississippi's waters, and blend with every breeze that sweeps over the western prairies. Shoulder to shoulder, the Whigs of the Union will march to the battle and the victory, under their star-spangled banner—an "Army of Occupation," bent on placing their leader in the White House on the fourth of March next. Proudly does that flag wave, now that it is inscribed with the name of ZACHARY TAYLOR, for he has ever sustained its glory.



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